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ABSTRACT

A statewide questionnaire survey of 180 Tennessee public school principals examined their perceived degree of participation in decision-making in six policy areas and compared it with their degree of satisfaction with the decisions made in those areas. The principals were selected from three sets of school systems: those which had had formal professional negotiations before the 1978 Tennessee Education Professional Negotiations Act; those which had had negotiations only after the passage of the act; and those which had never had formal negotiations. The six policy areas comprised curriculum and instruction, finance and business management, educational facilities and auxiliary services, school-community relations, pupil personnel, and certified personnel. Using analysis of variance, the researchers found that there were not significant differences in levels of satisfaction among the three groups of principals in any policy area except certified personnel; in this area, the principals from systems with pre-1978 negotiations were least satisfied and least active in decision-making. The findings also indicated that principals from non-negotiating systems participated least in decision-making in two areas: finance and business management and educational facilities and auxiliary services. (Author/RW)

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A STUDY TO DETERMINE PRINCIPALS' LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING AND SATISFACTION WITH DECISIONS MADE WITHIN SELECTED POLICY AREAS

by

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Research Procedure

A questionnaire was mailed to three groups of Tennessee public school principals. Group I consisted of principals from school systems which engaged in formal professional negotiations prior to the enactment of the Tennessee Education Professional Negotiations Act of 1978. Principals from school systems negotiating after the passage of the 1978 law comprised Group II. Group III was made up of principals from school systems which had never participated in formal negotiations. There was a return of 180 questionnaires (approximately 67 per cent) from the state-wide sample.

A one-way Analysis of Variance was computed to determine if a significant difference existed among the three groups' level of perceived participation in decision making and personal satisfaction with decisions made within the six specified policy areas: Curriculum and Instruction, Finance and Business Management, Certificated Personnel, Pupil Personnel, Educational Facilities-Auxiliary Services and School-Community Relations. The .05 level of significance was considered appropriate for this study.

Results

Table I shows the F ratios for perceived participation and for satisfaction with decisions made in the six policy areas.

Table I

Ratios For Perceived Participation and Satisfaction In Six Policy Areas

	Perceived Participation F Ratio	Satisfaction F Ratio
Curriculum and Instruction	.3787	.3387
Finance and Business Mgt.	.0003*	.4219
Certificated Personnel	.0187*	.0035*
Pupil Personnel	.1331	.7043
Educational Facilities and Auxiliary Services	.0323*	.1690
School-Community Relations	.4461	.4087

*Significant at the .05 level

A significant difference among the three groups of principals, concerning perceived participation, was found in the policy area of finance and business management, certificated personnel and educational facilities and auxiliary services. Table II shows the mean scores for perceived participation in the policy areas in which significant differences were found.

Table II

Mean Scores For Perceived Participation In
Policy Areas in Which Significant Difference Were Found

Policy Area	Group I	Group II	Group III
Finance and Business Mgt.	4.28	4.94	3.45
Certificated Personnel	5.99	6.78	6.93
Educ. Facilities-Auxiliary Services	6.09	6.37	5.48

In the policy area of finance and business management, the principals in Group I (negotiated before the Tennessee Law) had a mean score for perceived participation of 4.28 on a progressive scale of 1-9 (1 = Low Participation, 9 = High Participation). Group II's score was 4.94 and Group III had an average score of 3.45. Therefore, principals in Group III (Never Negotiated) perceived themselves to be less involved in decisions related to finance and business management than either Group I (Negotiating before the Tennessee Law) or Group II (Those Negotiating after passage of Tennessee Law). An example in this policy area would be a decision "to increase local contributions to salaries."

A significant difference also existed among the groups in the certificated personnel policy area. The mean score for Group I was 5.99, Group II was 6.78 and Group III equalled 6.93. The principals in Group I perceived their participation to be less than those in the other groups on

decisions affecting certificated personnel. The certificated personnel policy area included decisions such as a decision "to transfer a teacher from school A to school B."

The principals in Group I had a mean score of 6.09 in the Facilities and Auxiliary Services policy area. Those in Group II averaged 6.37 and Group III was 5.48. The principals serving in school systems which had never been involved in negotiations were perceived to be less active in decisions relating to the school facilities and auxiliary services. For example, a decision "to provide additional space at a local school building."

There was a significant difference indicated among the groups for expressed satisfaction with decisions made within the certificated personnel policy area. Table III shows the mean scores for perceived satisfaction with decisions made in the policy area in which a significant difference was found.

Table III

Mean Scores For Perceived Satisfaction With Decisions Made In The Policy Area In Which Significant Difference Was Found

Policy Area	Group I	Group II	Group III
Certificated Personnel	5.81	6.89	6.85

The mean score for principals in Group I was 5.81, Group II scored an average of 6.89, and the mean for Group III was 6.85. Interestingly, the principals who had been involved in negotations prior to passage of the Tennessee law and for the longest period of time were less satisfied than the other two groups. There were no significant differences found among the groups within the other policy areas. (Curriculum and Instruction, Finance and Business Management, Pupil Personnel, Educational Facilities and Auxiliary Services and School-Community Relations.)

Findings

The findings of the study are summarized as follows:

(1) The principals from school systems not negotiating were less involved in decisions related to finance and business management.

(2) Principals from school systems who negotiated prior to the passage of enabling legislation were less active in certificated personnel decisions.

(3) Principals in school systems not negotiating participated less in the facility and auxiliary service decision making process.

(4) There were no significant differences found among the groups in the Curriculum and Instruction, Pupil Personnel, or School Community Relations policy area.

(5) There were no significant difference in levels of satisfaction among the groups in five of the six policy areas. A significant difference was only found in the Certificated Personnel policy area.

Conclusions

The principals who were employed in school systems which had not been involved in formal professional negotiations perceived themselves to be less active in decision making within the finance and business management and educational facilities-auxiliary services policy areas. Additionally, those principals who were in the school systems which negotiated prior to the enactment of the Tennessee law indicated they

were less involved in the certificated personnel area than the other two groups. This may be the result of a formal contract with long-term personnel procedures established through the negotiative process.

Perceived levels of satisfaction among the principals within the school systems were not clearly affected by the negotiations process.